

# Behind the Ghutra

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I want to talk today about a serious human rights issue in the Muslim world, an issue that strikes at the heart of all that is wrong with Arab society: The Ghutra.

It's very rare to see a Gulf Arab man in public without a ghutra, and as we all know, people who appear in public in headscarves are obviously in a shocking state of subjugation and servitude, whether they know it or not. Since it would be preposterous to believe any person would choose to wear an item of clothing that I personally don't wear, I am led to the self-evident conclusion that the men of the Gulf region are being forced to wear the ghutra by their oppressive female overlords. (Overladies?)

The ghutra is clearly designed by these female oppressors to limit men's mobility. It is impossible to run in a ghutra, since it would come flying off one's head; this is clearly intended to prevent men from running away when their wives start nagging them. Even tipping one's head to the side or slouching may unbalance the 'agal -- the black cord that holds the ghutra in place -- so men are forced to walk, sit and stand in an unnaturally erect, stiff-necked posture. Oh, the chiropractic bills they must suffer to satisfy societal sexism!

Even more insidiously, the ghutra impedes equitable male education in the Gulf. Wearing the ghutra distracts boys from their studies, since (as any professor can tell you) they are forced to spend 10 minutes of every hour adjusting the angle of their agal, flipping and refliping the corners of their ghutra, and so on. Who can concentrate on abstract mathematical theories when one's "cobra" is coming untucked? Meanwhile, the girls in the class, undistracted by their practical, pinned hujub, are able to concentrate better on the material and thus throw the curve. This dastardly plot to undermine men's educational success is obviously working, since girls outperform boys at every level of education in Qatar.

The oppression doesn't end with the ghutra, though. Muslim boys are taught from a young age that showing certain parts of their bodies in public is sinful. The area between their belly button and knees is called their "awrah," or "defectiveness" -- even the terminology itself shows how Muslim men have been indoctrinated into seeing their bodies as inferior! Of course, we from more enlightened countries understand that no parts of the body are embarrassing to show in public, which is why we walk around naked all the time.

Islam's primitive belief that some body parts should be covered presents a significant barrier to integration with the West, since instead of wearing Speedos at the beach or pool like normal Europeans, Muslim men are forced to wear baggy swim trunks that conceal their "awrah." As we know from the recent burqini controversy, it's "[unhygienic and unsafe](#)" to wear anything larger than a postage stamp in a pool, so these swim trunks need to be banned immediately throughout the Western world. After all, there's nothing at all ridiculous about us banning other cultures' clothing and then accusing them of being opposed to integration when they object.

So by all means, let's not talk about actual social problems in the Arab world. Let's not talk about human trafficking, about freedom of speech, about the way lack of enforcement of the labor law allows de facto slavery. Let's not treat Gulf society like a normal culture that has good sides and bad sides, struggles and victories, achievements to be proud of and problem areas it's still working on. Instead, let's keep our focus on bits of cloth and the body parts they cover. That's what's really important.

*Note: The above is satire, written to parody articles that claim that Muslim women must be oppressed by the hijab.*